

TOP SECRET

16 January 1958

CONSIDERATIONS BEARING ON NEED FOR RECONNAISSANCE

1. The two Soviet satellites have made overflights of the free world countless times. Although these are probably not reconnaissance vehicles, it is widely recognized that reconnaissance satellites will before long be overflying both the Soviet Bloc and the free world. Under these circumstances the political sensitivity of other types of overflight activity is surely far less than it was.

2. We do not know:

- a. How many Bears and Bisons the Soviets have;
- b. Whether they have largely skipped the build-up of a force of manned bombers in favor of missiles; or,
- c. Whether they are introducing a new long range bomber far more advanced than the Bison.

3. It is vital to learn when and where the Soviets build operational missile sites. Aerial photography is the only promising means of discovering such sites and it will be far easier to discover them when they are under construction than after completion.

4. There have been major changes in our estimates of Soviet nuclear capabilities and of the scope of the Soviet missile program on the basis of the relatively small number of AQUATONE missions authorized last summer. Photography of long range Air Force bases and of additional nuclear production facilities could yield equally important results with a direct bearing on U. S. programs.

5. It is the verdict of technical intelligence personnel in CIA and throughout the Air Force that the U-2 aircraft may begin to be in greater danger of interception by next autumn -- we may have only eight or nine months left.

NRO review(s) completed.

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